

## [Oregon in the Early '70s]

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Form [md] 3

Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title Oregon in the early 70's

## Library of Congress

Informant: J. R. Irving

Place of origin Portland, Oregon Date 4/14/39

Project worker Sara B. Wrenn

Project editor

Remarks

Form A

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date April 14, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject Oregon in the early 70's

Name and address of informant J. R. Irving Boone's Ferry Road, Route I, Oswego, Oregon

Date and time of interview April 11, 1939, afternoon.

Place of interview Home, at above address

Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant —

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Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you —

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Shabby living room of shabby old two-story house, built in the 70's. The room was high-ceilinged, heated by an airtight stove, the pipe of which entered a closed fireplace. The mantel, of white fluted lines, had once been beautiful. The room, as well as the rest of the house, was lighted by kerosene lamps; old-fashioned hanging lamps with flower-painted, thin China shades, hung from the ceiling by chains. At one end of the room was a bay-window, where a sewing machine stood. At the other end was a windowless recess, in which there was a sleeping cot and chair. Adjoining was a dining-room, the furniture of which bore evidence of more prosperous days. An interesting item here was a large, framed photograph of a huge, cupolaed mansion typical of the early 70's.

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The garden about the house was apparently begun with much ambition for the future. Once a large farm, with an orchard at the back and fields wandering over the farther hills, the entrance is through old brick pillars, with an avenue of tall lombardy poplars, planted in 1875, leading beyond the house and up to where the mansion was to have been. A hedge surrounds the garden, within which, among flowers and shrubbery, are several old colored porcelain plant containers. Many old outbuildings — a huge barn, cow sheds, wood sheds, etc.— yet remain; some of them falling into ruins, and all of them, including the house, badly in need of paint.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

## Library of Congress

### OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

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Address 505 [?] Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject Oregon in the Early 70's

Name and address of informant J. R. Irving Boone's Ferry Road, Rt, I, Oswego, Oregon

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of Informant
10. Other points gained in interview

1. Robert Irving, father; Mary Hargraves Irving, mother. Both English. Father came to America from England in 1858, returning later for mother.

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2. Colne, Lancaster, England, in 1860.

3. Family: Wife, Frances [Rohne?] Irving. Children, Mrs. Mary Patton, daughter “ Rose Lane “ “ Carol Knutson “ Roland Irving, son

4. England. Victoria B.C., two or three years. Oregon, since 1875 — 64 years.

5. Public schools only.

6. [soapuaking?], occupation. No accomplishments

7. Chief interest, stock and farming

8. Member Protestant church.

9. Small wiry man, with blue eyes, white hair and smooth face.

10. A man who, while seemingly born to poverty in England, where he began work at seven years of age, had reason to expect that he might live in the status of a country gentleman, when a young man: as his father would appear to have been something of a promoter, who hob-mobbed with Portland's early promoters.

Form C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date April 14, 1939

## Library of Congress

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject Oregon in the Early 70's

Name and address of informant J. R. Irving Boone's Ferry Road, Rt. 1. Oswego, Oregon

Text: Yes, we've lived 'ore all these years, an' now the old 'ouse is about ready to fall on us; while down where you live on the lake, land is sellin' at all kinds of prices for just a lot. Oswego Lake, huh! We all 'ays called it Sucker Lake. When the young uns went down there to swim years ago the roads was a foot deep in dust. In winter they was mud.

Do I know anything about the old White 'Ouse, down on the river? Why damn it, o' course I do. I know all them fellers that went out there. Everybody that 'ad a fast horse — and all the bloods 'ad fast horses in them days—drove out the old Macadam Road along the river to the White 'Ouse. It 'ad wide porches, out over the river, and a body could get most anything to drink. They used to say that was where a man took another man's wife. Then if he found out some way his wife wus there with mebbe the husband of the woman with 'im, 'e'd drive around the 'alf-mile racetrack an' go back to town, as good as you please. That's what they said, an' that you could hev just about anything you wanted at the White 'Ouse, besides fine food and champagne. But damn it, the White 'Ouse was a purty good sort of a place. I never saw anything wrong with it, and I see plenty of men there with their wives, too.

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Joe Leonard, it was, built the White 'Ouse and the 'alf mile race track adjoining. Joe was a sport, but 'e was a perty fine feller, liberal with 'is money as 'ell. Why God damn it, of course they gambled. Heverybody gambled them days. They played poker some out there. But mostly they played a sort o' shuffle board, built like a billiard table, with halleys on the side, an' they shuffled with quoits. 'Ardly ever played that game for less then \$20.00 a throw. They 'ad cockfights there too, but I never took much interest in 'em. Mostly it

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was 'ores races. Sometimes there'd be as many as two to three 'undred people matchin' them for the best three in five rounds o' the track. Le's see, there was DeLashmutt, an' Bob Wilkes an' Dick Aberdeen, an' Count Wilson. Oh 'ell! I can't remember them all — heverybody in town what was anybody. Bob Smith, 'e was another. Wilkes, 'e was 'orseman for Simeon Reed.

When a man drank them days, 'e drank. Went to the sideboard or put 'is foot on the rail of a bar, and took 'is whiskey down neat. These fancy cocktails today 's 'nough to make a real man sick. Them was the days they 'ad prizefights too, but they couldn't al'ays 'ave 'em in Portland. I remember once when the sports in town 'ired a boat 'an went down to Lewis River, an' Jack Demsey an' Joe Reilly fought five rounds. Then Dempsey knocked Dave Campbell out in 'nother five rounds. Then they 'ad a real fight; a feller named Sullivan an' Bunco Kelly fought a 'underd rounds; an' fore they called a draw they was jest rollin' in the mud. It was Cap. Carroll engineered them fights.

Them was the days o' shanghai' too. Jim Turk an' the Grant boys, an' Larry Sullivan, they was in cahoots with the sailor boardin' 'ouses; an' some o' them they run too. Shanghai' wasn't so bad sometimes. I 3 remember old Flavel, 'e was rich an' owned a lot o' property. Flavel — I guess there isn't anything left of it now. That was to be a big town down on the Columbia, off from Astoria, wasn't it? Anyway old Flavel 'ad a son, an' 'e's no good; just spoiled with money, so the old man got Jim Turk to shanghai him. 'E was out at sea about a years an' after 'e got back 'ome 'e be'aved 'imself perty good.

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Yes, we got a telephone 'erc. I bet it's the honly one of its kind in the world. Habout thirty years ago twelve of us out 'ere in this community got together an' built us a telephone line. We got the poles an' 'ad the wires stretched an' then we got connection with Portland an' now God damn it, they can't get rid o' us. They'd like to, hall right, but they can't. They've tried hall which ways, but we can go right to that old 'phone on the wall an' ring Broadway

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an' get heny number in town we want, an' hall it costs us his \$13.50 a year. I guess it'll last as long as heny of us are alive, but we can't add anybody to our list. Just that horiginal twelve families.

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Form D

Extra Comment

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Comment:

While Mr. Irving received what education he has in this country, strangely enough, he is strongly addicted to cockney English, which the interviewer has tried to reproduce, together with his healthy profanity.